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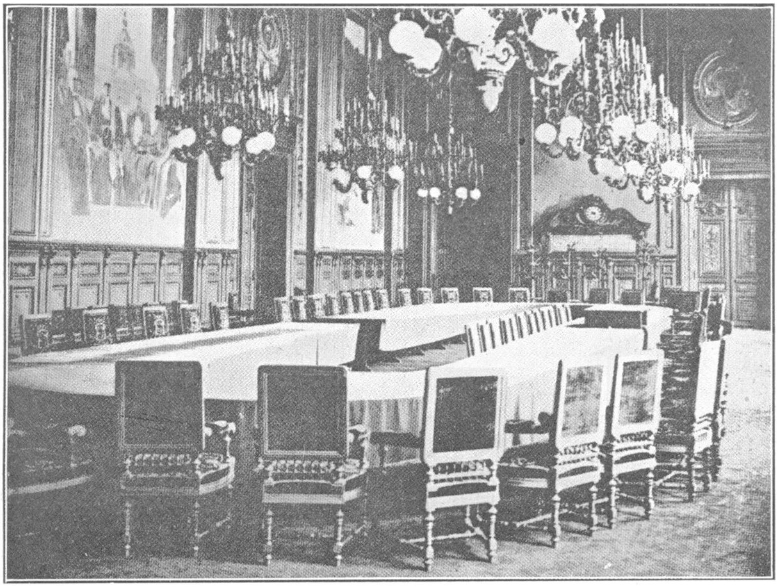

THE COUNCIL ROOM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS.

THE CHEMICAL WARFARE SERVICE

THE meeting of the American Chemical Society in Cleveland and the National Exposition of Chemical Engineers in New York have brought to general attention the great part played by chemistry in national welfare and in the conduct of the war. Modern warfare is essentially engineering, and there is scarcely any department with which chemistry is not vitally concerned. The part that has been played by our chemists in warfare is well described by Dr. Charles L. Parsons, the secretary of the American Chemical Service, in an address that he gave at Cleveland.

Before the entry of the United States into the war, a census was taken of American chemists, and full information was obtained concerning the qualification of some 15,000. In the early part of February, 1917, the president of the American Chemical Society, Dr. Julius Stieglitz, offered the services of the members to President Wilson in any emergency that might arise and received an appreciative reply.

Active work was begun by the Bureau of Mines and other agencies which culminated in the organization of the Chemical Warfare Service in June, 1918. As Dr. Parsons says it was a real epoch in the history of chemistry in warfare when, as a result of conferences held at the Bureau of Mines with officers from the Medical Corps, War College, General Staff, Navy and civilian chemists, the Chemical Service Section was established as a unit of the National Army.

All newly drafted chemists are assigned to the Chemical Warfare Service to be detailed or transferred or furloughed where needed. It is charged with the "responsibility of providing chemists for all branches of the government and assisting in the procuring of chemists for industries essential to the success of the war and government." It has an authorized personnel of 45,000, of which any portion may be chemists if needed. At present there are approximately 1,400 graduate chemists in the Chemical Warfare Service.

Dr. Parsons concluded his address with the words:

> War, the destroyer, has been on the other hand the incentive to marvelous chemical development with a speed of accomplishment incomprehensible in normal times. Discoveries made in the search for instruments of destruction are already in use for the development of chemical industry. Many others, unpublished as yet, and to remain unpublished until the war is over, will prove of the utmost benefit to mankind. The same agencies that add to the horror of war to-day, the same reactions which are used in the development of explosives and poisonous gases on the one hand, and in counteracting their effect on the other, will find immediate and useful application in the years to come. The war has been prolonged by chemistry. The German chemist, apparently working for years with war in view, has supplied the German armies with the means for their ruthless warfare, but the chemists of America and our Allies have met them fully in chemical development, and when the chemical story of the war is written where all can read, it will be the verdict of history that the chemists of America were not found wanting. The chemical program of the United States Army and Navy has been at all times ahead of our trained man power and the mechanical devices necessary to apply what the chemists of America have produced.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

WE record with regret the death of Aaron Nicholas Skinner, formerly professor of mathematics at the U. S. Naval Academy and assistant astronomer of the Naval Observatory; of Charles R. Eastman, of the American Museum of Natural History, the author of important contributions to paleichthyology; of Bertram Hopkins, professor of mechanism and applied mechanics in Cambridge University, Colonel in the British Army, and of O. Henrici, F.R.S., emeritus professor of mechanics and mathematics in the Central Technical College of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

MAJOR GENERAL MERRITTE W. IRELAND, of the Medical Corps, has been appointed Surgeon General of the Army, to succeed Major William C. Gorgas, who was retired on October 5. General Gorgas will remain in Europe as the medical representative of the United States Army at the Interallied War Council.—Dr. Arthur L. Day, director of the Geophysical Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington since its establishment in 1906, home secretary of the National Academy of Sciences, has resigned to accept a research position with the Corning Glass Works, Corning, N. Y.

THE statutory meeting of the general committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was held in London in July, and at this meeting much disappointment was expressed that for the second year in succession it has been found impossible to arrange for an ordinary meeting. A resolution was passed unanimously asking the council to arrange for a meeting in London next year, if it should prove impossible to arrange to meet at Bournemouth. The question as to the type of meeting which it was desirable to hold was left to the council to decide.